

After being assured that all was tranquil, and that the Royal family was secure against every danger, I myself set out at four o'clock on the morning of the 20th of March, taking the road to Lille. Nothing extraordinary occurred until I arrived at the post-office of Tins, in front of which were drawn up a great number of carriages, which had arrived before mine, and the owners of which, like myself, were impatiently waiting for horses. I soon observed that some one called the postmaster aside in a way which did not appear entirely devoid of mystery, and I acknowledge I felt some degree of alarm. I was in the room in which the travellers were waiting, and my attention was attracted by a large bill fixed against the wall. It was printed in French and Russian, and it proved to be the order of the day which I had been fortunate enough to obtain from the Emperor Alexander to exempt post-horses, etc., from the requisitions of the Allied troops.

I was standing looking at the bill when the postmaster came into the room and advanced towards me. "Sir," said he, "that

Courts of Austria and England, with letters declaring that, whether Napoleon succeeded or failed in his enterprise, he (Joachim), firm in his policy, would not fail in faithfully maintaining the anti-Bonaparte alliances he had formed. Those declarations were frauds and deceptions, for the King nourished in his heart designs perfectly contrary to them. He doubted the good faith of Austria and the Congress assembled at Vienna: he remembered all the faults and acts of injustice committed there, as also the threats he had received. He again relied upon the good fortune of Napoleon, whom he already fancied re-seated on his throne, the most powerful—the first monarch in Europe! His heart grieved at the recollection of the evil he had recently done the French in Upper Italy, and he now hoped to make amends for it by deeds which should aid and assist the bold enterprise of his brother-in-law. And mixed up with all these thoughts was the ambitious desire of making himself master of all Italy; to hold it, and then after the event to treat diplomatically with Austria or with France, according as victory should declare herself for Napoleon or for the Allies. He knew he should surprise the Austrians; he did not fear the English, because he had concluded an armistice with them; nor did the Allies cause him uneasiness, as they would be fully occupied with the war on the French frontiers."

Murat's ministers, his friends, nay, even his wife, the very sister of Bonaparte, endeavored to dissuade him from this rash undertaking, or to induce him at least to delay its execution and quietly wait events. But he would not listen to reason. He would not be bound by the engagements he had entered into with Napoleon, who was to give him the *mot-d'ordre*, when he was to throw off the mask, and on the 15th of March, just eleven days after his receiving the news of his brother-in-law's escape from Elba, he openly declared war. On the 22d of March the Neapolitan army advanced upon Upper Italy, and Murat, rushed blindly and precipitately to his ruin (*N tor hi dri fteawe di Napoli, del Generale Pietro Colletta*, vol. ii. p. 205, English edition).